



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: Indiana State Board of Education
FROM: Alicia Kielmovitch, Director of Policy and Legislation
RE: Immediate Freeway Accreditation for Kinwell Academy
DATE: July 3, 2017

Recommendation: Approve five-year freeway accreditation contract beginning 2017-18.

Issue Summary: Kinwell Academy is interested in obtaining accreditation through the freeway provision. It was part of The Crossing system of schools, operating the Marion County campus.¹ Kinwell is petitioning the Board to issue immediate freeway accreditation beginning in 2017-18. HEA 1384 authorizes the State Board to issue immediate freeway accreditation to a school, which permits it to access choice funding in year one, if it so chooses, and waive certain statutes and regulations through its contract.

Rationale: Kinwell serves as a dropout recover school, partnering with high schools across Marion County. Its primary partner is Marion High School, where 75% of its students originate. Kinwell was accredited as a part of The Crossing, but has lost that accreditation since parting ways. Without accreditation, Kinwell cannot continue to serve at-risk students from Marion High School and across the county. The traditional public school would lose a partner and students would lose a pathway to high school graduation. Over the past three years, Kinwell has graduated 44 students who otherwise would not have graduated high school.

Kinwell has 57 students in grades 9 thru 12. Currently, 32 of Kinwell's students qualify for free or reduced lunch and six have an IEP. Because The Crossing schools all operate under one school number, the data cannot be disaggregated by campus by the Department of Education. Based on Kinwell's self-reported data for 2016-17, students earned an average of 9.8 credits. Sixteen students graduated this past year; 52 students have graduated over the past five years. The attendance rate was 82.7%, with a retention rate of 92.2%.

Below is Kinwell's self-reported data for the past three years:

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Retention rate	86%	88%	92.2%
Attendance rate	90.3%	86%	82.7%
Credits earned per student	10.5	8.8	9.8
Graduates	12	16	16
Enrollment	52	65	57

Kinwell had 12 students enrolled in the Job Training Program. It issued 48 credits related to job training and 22 certificates related to acquiring employable skills. Those students spent over 300 hours of service with the Marion community parks department. Kinwell has a 6:1 student-teacher ratio, which allows for greater one-on-one time with students to address their needs and challenges. One unique programmatic aspect of Kinwell is the time staff spends with students outside of the classroom. Kinwell

¹ <https://www.crossingeducation.com/marion/>



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staff takes students on field trips and activities to build trust and community among the students and staff. On average, staff spends 18.9 hours of one-on-one support per student. On average, students spend 21.3 hours performing community service. Its job training programs are aligned to local businesses' needs. One goal is to help this student population secure stable employment after graduation.

Background on Kinwell: Kinwell Academy was part of The Crossing network of campuses. Kinwell has an established partnership with Marion High School to serve as its alternative school. It serves students at-risk students with credit deficiency or behavioral issues. As well, some of its students need an alternative learning environment to meet their needs that a traditional school cannot offer and which Kinwell can provide. It offers academic programs to help students graduate high school and job training programs to help students develop employable skills.

Through its Board of Directors and staff, Kinwell has developed strong ties to the community – particularly in its partnership with Marion High School. As an independently accredited school, Kinwell hopes to expand its partnership with other high schools in the county.

Through its freeway autonomy, it hopes to have greater flexibility in the choice and implementation of academic programs. Kinwell hopes to adapt its current academic model to meet its local context and its students abilities, needs, and challenges more effectively. Kinwell has found that building relationships with students is crucial to improving students' academic achievement and performance. It is seeking autonomous accreditation in order to increase its focus on strategies that will address their students' unique challenges through relationship- and trust-building activities with the staff. Kinwell has piloted this through their field trips with students, but hopes to expand this aspect of their school through independent accreditation. As well, independent accreditation will offer greater autonomy over and flexibility with funding to execute these strategies.

Additionally, Kinwell hopes to include more social-emotional instructional practices into their education model. Because many students come from challenging backgrounds and/or have unique needs, Kinwell staff determined that these students need instructional practices and activities adapted to meet these situations. Staff hopes to make emotional support and wellness and life skills critical components in the school day, differentiating this instruction based on students' needs. Kinwell also hopes to develop an intense leadership programmatic component as part of the Job Training Program. Staff has noted students' potential to be outstanding leaders in the community, but require proper instruction and guidance. They intend to include leadership training as part of its new Job Training Program. Through independent accreditation, it hopes to gain site-based autonomy to center its decision making closer to its students.